(c) whether valid agreements have been signed with all these parties; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and the likely time by which these agreement would be signed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) In March 2006, fourteen operators were given "In Principle" approval to operate container trains from ports to Inland Container Depots (ICDs) and vice versa.

(c) and (d) Model Concession Agreement is being finalised and is likely to be signed by September, 2006.

Finalization of Miraj-Pandharpur Rail Line

3140. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the finalization of Miraj-Pandharpur line (137 Kms) including the construction of minor bridge works is pending since long time;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether this delay is due to re-tendering; and

(d) if so, how many tenders were re-tendered for minor bridges on Pandharpur (137 Kms) section and how many times and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) Pandarpur-Miraj Gauge Conversion (137Kms) is planned for execution as last phase of Miraj-Latur Gauge Conversion (374 kms) project. On this section, one contract of minor bridge had been terminated as contractor abandoned the work asking for enhancement in rates due to increase in price of steel. Risk and cost tenders were invited twice but could not be finalized first time due to quoted higher rates and second time none of the tenderer fulfilled the eligibility criteria.